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dialogue

The Staff Newsletter of the Ministry of Community and Social Services

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Hire a student? Oui/Yes!

The Ontario-Quebec Summer Student Job Exchange Program offers university students a chance to practise their second language, learn more about their neighbours' culture and experience an enriching work environment. The Ontario government encourages participation in this program.

To find out about participating in the program as supervisor of a student, just obtain an application form from



one of the following: directors, area managers, facility/centre administrators or Area Office French language services co-ordinators of the ministry.

If you're interested in hiring a university student from Quebec, act now. Send in your request by **December 15, 1994**, to the Provincial French Language Services Co-ordinator, MCSS, 56 Wellesley Street West, 17th Floor, Toronto ON M7A 1E9.

Document review looks at barriers, policies



The Document Review Working Group of the Employment Systems Review (ESR) Task Force undertook the task of reviewing MCSS documents. This portion of the ESR has three objectives:

- Determine if there are barriers in the written policies which are having, or are likely to have, a negative effect on the employment and promotional opportunities of the designated groups.

- Help determine what questions should be asked in the ESR's staff interviews and focus groups.
- Investigate issues that were identified through the data analysis and targeted for further study, such as the types of competition files that should be reviewed.

Reviewed materials include the MCSS Human Resources Guide, the Performance Management Resource

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Photo: Brian Rickels

Open house hi-jinks

Family Benefits staff who used to work at 3501 Dufferin Avenue in Toronto have relocated to renovated premises at 1870 Wilson Avenue West. They decided to hold an open house, and since the date coincided with Halloween, many staffers dressed for the occasion. The new premises were creatively and lavishly decorated by staff, and representatives from the various community agencies who attended were greeted by enthusiastic employees in a variety of fanciful costumes.

The costumed staff who gathered

for the photo were: front row, Laura Metcalfe, Erica Martin, Kelly Lawes and Aymnah Jinnah; second row, Jacqueline McMullan, Anita Johnson-Ford in mask, Gillian Burman and (in Maple Leaf sweater) Ersilia DeLuca; back row, standing, Isabel Alves-Vettoreto, Dora Marciello, Sarah Paratholi as troll, Mary Gallo, Cheryl Fisher wearing baseball cap, "Doctor" Mark Vanlangenhove and Carla Barate.

You can reach the Wilson Avenue office by calling 416-325-5900; fax is 325-5901.

Go Find It goes on-line

We're about to join the information superhighway.

Our ministry, along with the rest of the Ontario government, is completing an information-collecting effort for a government-wide resource and reference database called GO FIND IT.

When completed, Management Board Secretariat will be able to extract from GO FIND IT the information needed to produce the annual Freedom of Information (FOI) Directory of Records and the annual KWIC Index (which in 1995 will be combined into a two-volume publication for the first time).

Information from the GO FIND IT database of information will also be posted on the OPS GONET bulletin board and Internet — accessible to OPSers, as well as the public.

The purpose of GO FIND IT is to co-ordinate the province's data collection activities and increase public access to information, says Gary McCombs, a policy analyst with the ministry's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FIPP) Unit who is project lead for MCSS.

The data collection, which took place in October, crosses three areas: all ministry-maintained Personal Information Banks, such as client

program delivery or employee records systems (these are currently printed annually in the FOI Directory of Records), all ministry organizational charts, including activity descriptions (the same material printed annually in the KWIC Index) and all ministry information holdings of non-personal information, such as statistical databases (which are currently not printed in any publication).

A notice was sent to all ministry senior staff in October, and the data collection package was sent to all ministry FIPP representatives as well as records and forms co-ordinators, says Gary. These two groups were asked to verify and correct any current information and to add new information not currently in the database. This was sent on to MBS this month and will be uploaded into the MBS-operated GO FIND IT database.

Gary says it's anticipated that within the next two years this process will change from an annual exercise in data collection to an on-going update done through an on-line capability. Responsibility will probably stay within ministry, agency and board FIPP Units, since FIPA legislation is a key component of the activity.



Photo: Ivor Kenyon

Can you believe these people climbed the staircase to the top of the CN Tower just to get these certificates? Well, of course not; they were supporting a good cause — the United Way. These are some of the members of the MCSS Stair-Climbing Team, who collected pledges for their participation and helped swell the coffers for the 1994 United Way campaign. And most of them climbed the 1,760 steps in 15 minutes! Our climbers were: in front, Doug Shoemaker, Sallie Thayer (with well-deserved juice drink in hand) and Anna Difelice; behind them, Cote Parker and Esther Kulman; and, back row, Chris Baffler, Joanna Bak, Brian Low and Kevin Morris. Not seen in the photo are their fellow climbers Mike Nowlan, Graham Scott and Mark Glenen.



The executive director of Clifton Youth Services and Turning Point Youth Services, Uri Ingra, explains government funding of youth services to two visitors from Russia, Svetlana Tcherkassova and Marina Miroshkina.

Russian visitors tour youth services

by Eileen Dooley

Understanding Canada's social system was on the agenda for Russian delegates from the Yeltsin Democracy Fellowship Program who visited Toronto and the ministry Oct. 17-21. The primary focus for the visit was to learn how Ontario deals with underprivileged and homeless youth.

"We are interested in the system and want to understand each part of the system," said Marina Miroshkina, vice-president of the Federation of Children's Organizations of Russia.

With a focus on ministry-funded youth centres, the delegates visited Clifton Youth Services, a residential program that teaches boys aged 15 to 18 the skills for independent living. They also visited Turning Point Youth Services and Duferin Mall Youth Services which offer counselling and a day-time drop-in program for young males. (Turning Point also offers shelter services.)

Plain language, please!

With this issue of Dialogue, we're introducing a new feature on using plain language in MCSS.

It's part of a government-wide effort to encourage employees to use

Impressed with the ministry's facilities and government support, the delegates will now apply this knowledge for possible implementation in Russia.

"Most important is the change of ideas," said Svetlana Tcherkassova, delegate and regional chairman of the Federation of Children's Organizations. "This is about bringing up an independent generation."

Afflicted by a struggling economy, Russia does not have the educational curriculum to train social workers adequately. Lack of teachers, due to poor pay, contributes to Russia's social problems, such as youth poverty and crime.

The program, funded in part by the Government of Canada, is intended to support economic, political and social reform for the Russian Federation. Other Canadian stops for the two delegates included Montreal, Saskatoon and Ottawa.

everyday language in all their work. This includes written reports, letters and forms and especially in anything intended for use by the public.

"At one time, it might have been okay to use jargon that only insiders could understand, but not any more," says Deputy Minister Rosemary Proctor. "These days, government business is everybody's business. People want to know about the ministry's work. That means using everyday words that anyone can understand."

The idea is to make the ministry more accessible (and we're only going to use that word once). When you use language that people can't easily understand, it ends up costing time, effort and money to straighten out misunderstandings. "It makes things easier for everyone in the long run when we use everyday language," says Rosemary.

In every issue of Dialogue we'll offer tips to help you use plain language in your day-to-day work.

And in the future, the ministry hopes to offer training in plain language for staff who want to know about it. This may include a "correspondence course" that can be offered on e-mail. We're also exploring the idea of practical workshops for employees in their own work sites.

Car-pooling "matches" over the phone

The Green Workplace ... in the matchmaking business?

Yes — that is, matching people who want to commute to and from work in the car-pooling program called Share-A-Ride — because it's an environmentally-friendly way to get to work and home.

All you have to do to register for Share-A-Ride is call a toll-free number — 1-800-56-SHARE (that's 567-4273). This registry is available province-wide, and the federal government recently began encouraging federal civil servants in Toronto and Ottawa-Hull to participate.

Before you call, write down a four-digit identity code. You'll also need to input (on a touch-tone phone) your home postal code and your work postal code (see box).

Once you are registered, the Share-A-Ride computer will match you with other registrants who live and work within five kilometres of your home and work addresses (that's why they need your postal codes). You will also

1-800-56-SHARE
Touch-tone phone only.

Before you call, fill out the information below to help you register successfully. Return to decide on your personal ID number.

Your four digit Personal I.D. No.

Postal Codes (The postal codes before are entered on the phone keypad using the following codes)

A-21 K-52 I-81	Example
B-22 L-53 V-65	
C-33 M-61 W-92	Postal Code
D-44 N-62 A-93	
E-55 P-71 J-03	Keypad Entry
F-66 R-72 Z-11	
G-77 S-73	

M 7 2 1 R 5
6 1 7 8 3 2 7 2 5

Home Postal Code

Phone Keypad Entry

Work Postal Code

Phone Keypad Entry

be asked if you want to be a driver or a rider, and about your travel schedule.

In densely-populated cities, you may be matched almost immediately, and will be given the names and work phone numbers of people who live and work near you and are also willing to car-pool.

The toll-free number takes you through the registration process step by step, but if you need more information, contact Lydia Nigh at the Green Workplace (Management Board Secretariat) at 416-327-2675.

Probation officer authors guide to young offender system

When a young offender is arrested, will he be handcuffed? What's the maximum length of a probation sentence? When in court, how do you address the judge?

These are some of the questions covered in a guide to youth justice that has been written by an MCSS probation officer.

Lee Tustin, who is with the Niagara Falls probation office, has just published "Caught in the Act: A User's Guide to the Youth Justice System and Young Offenders Act." It's meant to be a guide to parents, professionals and youths as they navigate the often confusing maze of policy and procedures under the YOA.

Lee, who has been with the ministry since 1988, is a certified teacher and holds a master's degree in education as well as a graduate diploma in



Lee Tustin

social work, law and administration. "Caught in the Act" was published in September by Addison-Wesley Publishers and sells for \$18.95.

The answers to the questions in the first paragraph are: Yes, two years and "your honour."

Document review looks at barriers, policies

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Guide, orientation packages and a dozen others. Also included were 34 job competition files from 1991 to 1993, drawn from a variety of classifications, occupations and worksites across the province.

The criteria against which the document were reviewed were: adverse impact, consistency, job-relatedness, validity, accommodation, positive language and legality. Following the review, the group analyzed their findings and made recommendations to eliminate barriers.

Here are some of the themes which emerged:

- The profile (visibility) and integration of employment equity into MCSS documents and policies is absent or lacking.

- There is little evidence that good resource material is being used, while policy containing barriers is frequently applied.

- There is a great deal of local autonomy in how competitions are run and practices are inconsistent.
- Accommodation for people with disabilities must be addressed by this ministry. From lack of policy to processes, all aspects need to be clarified and emphasized as our obligation.

The recommendations of the document review report will be incorporated into the final report of the ESR.

For further information on the ESR, please contact project co-ordinator Hunter Saggart at 416-327-4933 or send e-mail to ESR_PROJECT.

Eliminate extraneous expressions, or Use fewer words

You can make your writing clearer and easier to understand by simply eliminating unnecessary words.

PLAIN LANGUAGE PLEASE

Instead of:

with regards to
in the event that
during such time
subsequent to
it would appear that
excessive number of
in respect of

Use:

about
if
while
after
apparently
too many
for

The Adoption Resource Exchange: Finding families for children

More than 40 adoption workers from across the province attended the fall Adoption Resource Exchange sponsored by the ministry's Adoptions Unit at Queen's Park.

The ARE is held twice a year and is an opportunity for adoption workers from the 54 children's aid societies in Ontario to meet and exchange profiles of adoptable children as well as profiles of adoption-ready families, in the hopes of making a suitable match. At ARE, workers are also brought up to speed on changes in legislation, ministry procedures and policies. Professional development seminars round out the gathering.

Here's a summary of activities at the Oct. 16-19 ARE:

Parents' Day presents children by video

On the afternoon of Oct. 16 more than 500 prospective adoptive parents gathered in the Ontario Room to watch videos of about 50 children awaiting adoptive families. The children were all Crown wards in the care of the children's aid societies in the province. Some were single children, some were sibling groups, and they ranged in age from about 6 months to 14 years. All had special needs.

The prospective parents had an opportunity to speak with CAS adoption workers to learn more about children in whom they were particularly interested.



Stable homes help kids to bond

Young children need to bond or "attach" to a primary caregiver at an early age, and those who have not made a crucial attachment by the time they are 18 months old almost always have severe cognitive and social deficits, adoption workers were told.

Dr. Paul Steinhauer, who is affiliated with the Hospital for Sick Children and the University of Toronto, explained that attachment is needed so that a child feels secure enough to explore her environment. Children have to take risks in order to learn, and when they learn, they build self-esteem. If they do not progress through these steps, they can experience psychiatric and social problems. These can include lack of impulse control, lack of empathy for others, aggression and behavioural problems.

Dr. Steinhauer said some of the factors that can lead to a permanently detached child include multiple moves as well as severe and long-term neglect or maltreatment.

Attachment is of interest to adoption workers because children who become available for adoption often come into the care of a child welfare agency after experiencing an

unstable life — the very conditions that create detachment.

The best way to avoid detachment is to ensure continuity in the child's life, said Dr. Steinhauer. This can be done through the use of treatment (specially-trained) foster parents and stable group homes.



Adoptive parents need support

What do adopting families need? They need support — moral and financial — after the final adoption papers have been signed, a panel of adoptive parents told adoption workers.

The three adoptive mothers — one of whom is a single mother — said they need children's aid societies to help them cope with the adoptive child's grief over losing their birth family. "A child's problems don't disappear when he moves from being a foster child to an adopted child," noted one mother.

Unfortunately, subsidies and agency resources that are available to foster children end when a child is adopted, and this can be a deterrent to adoption, said the mothers. (Note: Subsidies are available to adoptive parents if the agreement is entered into before the adoption is finalized. Subsidies can be available for special needs such as orthodontic work or therapy.)



Although the purpose of adoption is to "find families for children, not children for families," the mothers noted that adoption is an investment in the future of this province. If an adoption breaks down, it ends up costing society in more foster care, the mothers pointed out. It makes sense to support adoptive families with counselling and training to avoid adoption breakdown.

Creating awareness of the Adoption Disclosure Register

Oct. 19 was Adoption Disclosure Day at the ARE, and about 60 children's aid society workers came to Queen's Park to learn about changes in the ministry's procedures at the Adoption Disclosure Register.

Adoption disclosure refers to the opening of adoption records when an adopted adult applies for information about his origins. Applications are processed on a first-come, first-served basis, and there is a significant backlog just in getting applications to the register on computer. The manager of adoption and operational services, Colette Kent, told the workers that the search service — which matches adoptees to relatives not on the register — is now at work on the names of people who originally applied in 1988.

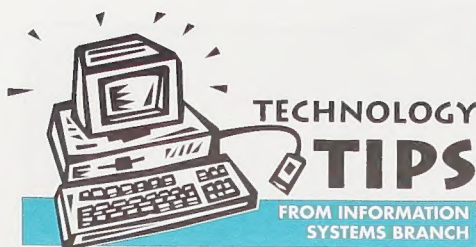
The best way to improve turn-around time is to increase the number of voluntary matches, and Colette outlined some of the ways the register is encouraging public awareness so people will voluntarily place their names on the register. Currently, fewer than 10 per cent of known adoptees and birth parents have put their names on the register.

The register is working with stakeholder groups such as ParentFinders and the Adoption Council of Ontario to "talk up" the

register; a flyer and poster have been distributed to stakeholder groups. Adoption unit staff are considering creating a flyer to be placed on e-mail with a request for every MCSS employee to print out one copy and put it on public display in their community.

A fact sheet about the register is being developed, a new brochure has been printed and an invitation to put one's name on the register is part of every Today's Child adoption column, which appears in a number of newspapers across the province.





WordPerfect upgrades and home use available

The WordPerfect CAP (Customer Advantage Program) agreement was signed between the Government of Ontario and WordPerfect in July. This corporate licensing agreement enables the Ontario government to combine ministry-wide purchases and obtain volume discounts. Corporate Software Canada Ltd. is the corporate reseller that will assist the ministry in managing and supporting the agreement.

This two-year maintenance program includes electronic documentation, the right to copy all software and access to new software releases as they become available — at no cost to the client (the ministry) for the products being maintained during the life of the agreement.

The programs covered are WordPerfect 5.1, WordPerfect 5.1+, WordPerfect 6.0 DOS, WordPerfect 6.0 Windows, WP Presentations 2.0 DOS, WP Presentations 2.0 Windows, WP Inform Designer 1.0B and WP Inform Filler 1.0A.

WordPerfect software and upgrade releases will be paid for by the Information Systems Branch via the Ministry Technology Fund. Hard copy documentation, if it's preferred, must be purchased separately.

Corporate Software Canada Ltd. provides software and on-line documentation disk set copying services at \$2.25 per diskette. Hard copy documentation can also be

ordered from Corporate Software Inc. for \$45. Remember that normal purchasing practices and constraint management guidelines still apply.

All installations, upgrades and documentation purchases should be co-ordinated by local systems staff who have received instructions on how to order directly from the re-seller. Each ministry office is responsible for tracking the use of WordPerfect products.

To minimize costs and manage software inventory and its use, we strongly recommend that offices install the products on their local area network and minimize individual PC installations.

The terms of the agreement also give the user the right to make and use a second copy of the product on a home or lap-top computer, as long as the additional copy is not used concurrently (that is, not loaded in memory at the same time as it is loaded in memory on the primary computer). Check with your systems officer for details.

Corporate Software Canada provides technical support for WordPerfect questions for systems staff only.

However, other staff can continue to call WordPerfect directly at 1-800-541-5096.

Please contact Cheryl Rouse (416-730-6528 or e-mail Rouse_C), or your local systems officer if you need more information.

Library and Career Resources: Meet the staff

When you phone, write or e-mail the ministry's Library and Career Resources at 880 Bay Street in Toronto, these are the friendly folks who reply: manager Dolly Lyn, Perry Tom (responsible for interlibrary loans and acquisitions), catalogue Sallie Thayer, Anna Difelice, who is in charge of circulation and responses to new resources requests, and Career Centre and references person Elizabeth Sharp.

Starting in the next (December/January) issue of Dialogue, the LCR staff will have a column that highlights services, new acquisitions and



Photo: Brian Pichard

information that you can use and how you can access them. You can reach the staff through their personal e-mail accounts, or by typing LIBRARY and pressing F1ND; phone is 416-326-6442; fax is 326-6453; visit or write to them at 880 Bay St., 4th floor, Toronto M7A 1E9.

People and Places

Joan Kruspe has left her position as Executive Assistant to the ADM of Program Management Division for a six-month secondment with the Attorney General's Office of the Public Guardian (Hamilton Region).

Dave Lockhart is the Chief Accountant for Financial and Administrative Services Branch. He comes to us from the Corporate Accounting Operations Office of the Ministry of Transportation. Allan Gunn, who has been acting as Chief Accountant, becomes Manager of Financial Reporting in Financial and Capital Planning until Mar. 31. In FCP's Program Support and Analysis Unit, Ann Stryker has become Manager; her number is 416-325-5126. Kevin French has replaced David Cope as Manager, Estimates and Allocations, while David is managing Workplace Accommodation and Safety Services.

Pat Weldon has been selected as



Pat Weldon



Dave Lockhart



Elizabeth Dow

Co-ordinator for the new Social Assistance Advisory Committee. Most recently, Pat has been on secondment as Senior Policy Analyst with the Strategic Directions Division. Her number is 416-326-6059 and the office is at 56 Wellesley St., fourth floor, Toronto.

Dave Zuccato returns in November to his home position as Area

Manager in Sault Ste. Marie. He has been Acting Area Manager in the North Bay/North East Area Office. Cynthia Lees, who has been Acting Manager in the Sudbury District Office, has accepted the Acting Manager position in North Bay.

A number of changes in the Social Assistance and Employment Opportunities Division: joining jobLink are Tricia Willis from the Child Care Branch and Tim Burns from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs. At Social Assistance Programs Branch, new staff include H.C. Chu, John Bothwell and Blair Dunker. And

Elizabeth Dow is the Executive Assistant to ADM Kevin Costante.

Consent to treatment spelled out

A booklet that explains the new Consent to Treatment Act is now available.

"A Guide to the Consent to Treatment Act" will be of interest to staff who work in facilities for people with developmental disabilities as well as other staff who work with client groups.

This act is part of a legislative package that includes the Substitute Decisions Act and the Advocacy Act, which protect the decision-making rights of all Ontarians and vulnerable people in

particular.

The booklet defines terms such as "informed consent" and "mentally capable" and answers questions such as "Who decides whether a person is mentally capable?" The act is expected to come into effect early next year.

For copies of the booklet, contact the Ministry of Health information centre at 2195 Yonge Street, 6th floor, Toronto M4S 2B2 (tel. 416-327-7730; fax 314-8721; toll-free 1-800-461-2036).



dialogue

Ontario Community and Social Services

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